

How to Make a Cold Call **HOT!**

Sales professionals that are successful in today's economic climate are those that have uncovered *new* business. They have thought outside of the box, gone out on a limb and found some of the quirkiest customers around. (Were you aware that there is a National Association of Left-handed Golfers in Tasmania?) The key to cultivating new business, and subsequently hotel sales success, is having strong and aggressive prospecting efforts.

If the thought of prospecting, also known as 'cold calling,' sends shivers down your spine, take heed in knowing that you are not alone. In order to be successful, first and foremost, you must not become discouraged. Think back to the days of the Wild West when gold prospectors spent days, even weeks, digging for gold. Most of the time they did not find anything but when they did make that strike, it was well worth the effort! Outlined below are additional tips to help establish an aggressive and targeted prospecting effort so that the YOU, too, can hit GOLD!

Plan Your Work, Work Your Plan

At the risk of sounding cliché, this simple mantra is the key to initial success. By nature, a hotel itself offers many distractions. To be effective, you need to actually schedule in your prospecting calls and stick to it!

- Let your co-workers know that you are in your selling time/mode. Ask for their help in minimizing interruptions, unless of course it is a client calling back. Establish and post a phone coverage schedule for the office.
- Close the door and clear off your desk. If you do not have a private office, consider using a guest room or meeting room.
- When the time comes to place the calls, know who you will be calling that day. If you designate 9AM to 11AM for calls, then at 9AM you should be on the first call not figuring out who you will be calling. Essentially, the entire call report should be completed in advance, except of course the actual notes from the interaction and the next action step.
- Establish a goal of what you want to achieve and constantly strive towards that goal. These goals give a sense of direction and accomplishment, which will help to keep you motivated.

Knowledge Is Power!

This second sales mantra holds just as true as planning your work in order to produce an effective and successful prospecting effort. Familiarize yourself as much as possible with the prospect's organization, its people, and the industry. Become an 'expert' in *their* field.

- Take time to browse a potential prospect's website, including where they have held meetings or events in the past or where they are scheduled for the future.
- Look up the organization on Google, Wikipedia or Hoover's.
- Read press releases about the organization to obtain relevant and timely information.
- Obtain their headquarter office location as well as any field offices for both inbound and outbound travel.
- If you have a contact name, look him or her up on LinkedIn or a similar web-networking site.
- Utilize on-line business contact directories such as Jigsaw or Spoke to obtain additional contacts.

Pre-planning is as much a part of effective and successful prospecting as actually picking up the phone and placing the call! Following these tips will help you establish an aggressive and targeted prospecting effort so that YOU can strike it rich!